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Rolling Thunder Roars onto Walter Reed Bethesda

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Journal
staff writer

Members of Rolling Thunder roared onto Naval Support Activity Bethesda Friday to visit wounded warriors, their families and staff at the Nation's Medical Center.

"It is support and team-building, but also it's an intimidation factor," said Army Sgt. Lucas Robert Oppelt, a wounded warrior in recovery at Walter Reed Bethesda. "You hear the bikes and it's a sweet sound," said the Soldier, injured last Memorial Day weekend by an improvised explosive device while serving as a medic with the 82nd Airborne Division.

"Coming here and seeing the bikes is pretty neat," Oppelt added. "It's the camaraderie and knowing people still care, especially for the guys who are still in-patients. I know it felt good when I was in [the medical center] to have people coming in and thanking us for our service." He said it's really special to have Rolling Thunder come during Memorial Day. "It's good to see people really know what it is about, rather than, 'hey, we get a weekend off, we can go party.' It's all about the veterans and people who fought for this country."

Rolling Thunder member Dave Blackmore rode his bike from Ohio to Washington, D.C., for the annual event, something he's done for more than 10 years to show his support for wounded warriors and to bring full accountability for prisoners of war (POWs) and those missing in action



Photo by Bernard S. Little

Army Sgt. Lucas Robert Oppelt (right), injured by an improvised explosive device while serving as a medic with the 82nd Airborne Division during Memorial Day weekend 2012 in Afghanistan, is thanked for his service and sacrifice by a member of Rolling Thunder when the group came to visit the Nation's Medical Center on May 24.

(MIA) from all U.S. wars.

"We're not a motorcycle club, but when we do the demonstration, we ride the bikes to raise awareness," Blackmore explained. "When you're on the bike, and you hear something coming down the road sounding like rolling thunder, it gets people to pay attention."

"There are children 10 and 11 years old now, and for all of their lives, we've had people in Iraq and Afghanistan," Blackmore added. "We want people to

realize there's a reason we can live as we do - because of the guys here and overseas who are doing things for their name and for their sake."

A member of Rolling Thunder for more than 15 years, Bob Lavariere served in the Marine Corps during Vietnam, and rode his bike from Conway, Ark., to D.C., for the Memorial Day Weekend event. The former Marine explained why he came to Walter Reed Bethesda to visit wounded warriors.

"I came here to thank

them for their service, and to hopefully, maybe, put a smile on their face, because of what they've been through and what they got to look forward to in the future," he said.

Rolling Thunder's main event, attended by tens of thousands of motorcyclists, occurs every Sunday before Memorial Day when its members make a slow ride from the Pentagon parking lot, across the Memorial Bridge and to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.



A stuffed Army bear came along for the ride when Rolling Thunder roared onto base for Memorial Day weekend.

Leadership Perspective

I did not intend to write about the 101 Critical Days of Summer this week, but then this happened;

Over the weekend a Sailor was apprehended on base for driving while intoxicated after rolling through a stop sign. The passenger in his vehicle, also a Sailor, was underage and had been drinking as well.

We all know the inherent dangers of drinking and driving, but unfortunately some still do it. This column isn't necessarily about drinking and driving, however – at least not directly. This article is about planning ahead.

The basic premise of the 101 Critical Days of Summer campaign is that during this time of year, people tend to be involved in riskier activities. We stay outside longer, and we indulge in activities that can often be dangerous (extreme sports, riding motorcycles, driving long distances). The overall point of 101 Critical Days of summer is not meant to get you to stop doing these activities, but to get you to think about how to do them safely.

Frankly put, a majority of the things the campaign covers are common sense. If you remember to buy and use sunscreen, you probably won't get sun burnt. If you plan your vacation route in advance and schedule in breaks to rest, you are less likely to fall asleep at the wheel and crash.



If you do a quick check of the playing field for obstructions, wear the right safety gear and evaluate your own physical limits before you play a sport, you're less likely to injure yourself. And, if you're going to drink alcohol, having a transportation plan, such as hiring a taxi or using a designated

driver might just save your life and the lives of others.

I would like to end on this note. A majority of individuals involved in reckless activities are selfish in their actions and regrettably forget about how they indirectly and sometimes directly affect others around them and in their lives. Their families, friends, shipmates, and even strangers unfortunately have to carry the burden of their actions when things go south.

I know this all too well as my father killed himself drinking and driving when I was only an 8-year-old boy. His irresponsible actions and failure to plan affected mine and my mother's lives for many years to come, and in some respects even to this day. This summer, lets all do things right; if not for ourselves, then for the loved ones in our lives.

**Chief Master-at-Arms
Marty McQuagge
Naval Support Activity
Bethesda
Senior Enlisted Leader**

Bethesda Notebook

JEM Accepting New Members

Today at 2 p.m. Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) is hosting a Junior Enlisted Mess (JEM) meeting for NSAB Sailors E-4 and below. This meeting will be held in Building 11, 2nd floor, Room 204. The leadership will discuss plans for volunteer work, fundraising ideas, T-shirts, etc. New members are encouraged to attend to see what JEM is all about. For more information, contact Religious Program Specialist 3rd Class John Leitzinger at 301-319-2118.

Prostate Cancer Speaker Program

The Walter Reed Bethesda Prostate Cancer Support Group's Quarterly Speaker Program meets today at 7 p.m. in the America Building, River Conference Room (next to the Prostate Center), 3rd floor. The speaker is Catherine Gray, Continence Nurse for the Urology Clinic. Her topic is "Urinary Incontinence." The program can also be viewed at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital via video-teleconference in the Oaks Pavilion, 1st floor, Room 332. Spouses and partners are invited. For men attending the Walter Reed program without a military ID, please call the Prostate Center at 301-319-2900 for base access. For more information, contact Col. (Ret) Jane Hudak at 301-319-2918 or jane.l.hudak.ctr@health.mil or Vin McDonald at 703-643-2658 or vpmjam@aol.com.

Resiliency Week

Walter Reed Bethesda will host Resiliency Week June 17-21 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Topics discussed during the event include: Resiliency and Psychological Health Service; Addiction Treatment Services; Integrated Health Services and Outpatient Clinical Nutrition Services; Resiliency and Psychological Health Service Physical; Resiliency and Psychological Health Services activities and Fleet and Family Support Center services; Employee Assistance Program and Preventive Medicine; Pastoral and Reiki services; and a staff talent show. For more information, call Army Lt. Col. Brett J. Schneider at 301-295-8737.

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Asian American, Pacific Islander Heritage Celebrated

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Journal staff writer

The Walter Reed Bethesda community celebrated Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month with dancing, music, food and fun during a program in the America Building atrium on May 16.

"The theme for this year's event is 'Building Leadership: Embracing Cultural Values and Inclusion.' AAPIs represent over 30 countries and ethnic groups that speak more than 100 different languages," said Sgt. 1st Class Jason Zielske, Equal Opportunity advisor and chair of the Bethesda Multicultural Committee.

"The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese people to the United States on May 7, 1843 and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. On Oct. 5, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a joint resolution designating the annual celebration of AAPI Heritage Week. Twelve years later, President George H.W. Bush signed an extension, making the week-long celebration into a month-long celebration," Zielske added.

Souvik Ghosh began the festivities playing the tabla, a percussion instrument, similar to bongos, used in Hindustani classical music and in popular and devotional music of India. The Filipino Association of Bethesda received crowd participation in their Tinikling dance, a popular traditional pre-Spanish dance from the Philippines that involves two people beating, tapping and sliding bamboo poles on the ground and against each other in coordination with one or more dancers who step over and in between the poles in a dance. Colorfully dressed dancers from the Natananjali School of Dance then performed Bharatanatyam, a popular form of classical dance from the southern part of India. Members of the Bethesda Multicultural Committee then served traditional Indian foods, concluding the celebration.

Army Sgt. Kevin Gatson, a wounded warrior in recovery at Walter Reed Bethesda, said he found the program enjoyable and entertaining. "I'd never seen Indian or Filipino dance, so I thought it was very interesting and a good performance." He added he thinks multicultural celebrations are necessary as well. "It's a way you can celebrate being proud of where you're from and let other people see, 'This is my culture and I want to share it with you.' It's a good thing for confidence and feeling good about where you're from and your culture."

"I like to learn about different cultures and not confine myself to what I'm used to seeing, in addition, my grandfather is from India," explained Army Sgt. Marcus Norwood about why he attended the program, which he described as "awesome."

"With this mass installation, diversity is critical," said Tyrone Boyd, a Walter Reed Bethesda civilian employee and native of the Virgin Islands. "With diversity, you have different perspectives of work and getting along with people, and that's important to me. Diversity in the workplace is great."



The Filipino Association of Bethesda performs a Tinikling dance, a popular traditional pre-Spanish dance from the Philippines.



Photos by Bernard S. Little

Dancers from the Natananjali School of Dance perform a Bharatanatyam, a popular form of classical dance from the southern part of India, during a program in the America Building atrium celebrating Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month recently.

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NMHM Shows Appreciation for Active-Duty Service Members and their Families

By Melissa Brachfeld
National Museum of Health and Medicine

For a third year, the National Museum of Health and Medicine (NMHM) is proud to announce that it is participating in the Blue Star Museums summer initiative.

The program offers free admission to museums for all active-duty military service members, including Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Marines, National Guard and Reserve members, and up to five family members from Memorial Day (May 27, 2013) through Labor Day (Sept. 2, 2013).

Blue Star Museums, first launched in the summer of 2010 to show appreciation to those who serve and their families, is a partnership among the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense and museums across the country. Blue Star Families is a nonprofit organization that supports, connects and empowers military families.

“Blue Star Museums is a collaboration between the arts and military communities,” said NEA

Acting Chairman Joan Shigekawa. “Our work with Blue Star Families and with more than 1,800 museums ensures that we can reach out to military families and thank them for their service and sacrifice.”

NMHM is celebrating its 151st anniversary at its home in Silver Spring, with exhibits that focus on advances in military medicine, the Civil War, the brain, anatomy and pathology, forensic identification and much more. This summer, NMHM will have a number of programs that will cover topics such as the Civil War, sports and anatomy, reconstructive plastic surgery in World War I, and “quack medicine.”

For more information about Blue Star Museums and a full list of participating museums, visit <http://www.nea.gov/national/bluestarmuseums/index2013.php>.

The National Museum of Health and Medicine, located at 2500 Linden Lane in Silver Spring, MD, is open every day from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (except Dec. 25). For more information, call 301-319-3300 or visit <http://www.medicalmuseum.mil>.



Photo courtesy of NMHM

National Museum of Health and Medicine docent Lisa Weed shows a visitor an anesthesia inhalation device pioneered during the Civil War. Visitors will see artifacts like this and more during the Civil War Discovery Cart program, happening June 14, June 28, July 12, July 26, Aug. 9 and Aug. 23, from 1-2 p.m. This is just one of the many programs the museum will hold while participating in Blue Star Museums this summer.



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Speaker Uses Humor to Urge Safety, Having Fun

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Journal
staff writer

Using a mix of humor and advice, motivational speaker Jody Urquhart encouraged members of the Walter Reed Bethesda staff to think safety while working, and have fun while doing so, at a series of one-hour mandatory training sessions on May 22 at Walter Reed Bethesda.

The safety training kicked off Walter Reed Bethesda's observance of the 101 Critical Days of Summer, the period between the Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day Monday when accidents tend to increase because of more outdoor and recreational activities. Safety officials stress people increase their vigilance when swimming, boating, driving, participating in activities in the sun and heat, grilling and cooking out, bicycling, jogging and working out and motorcycling.



Photo by Bernard S. Little

Motivational speaker Jody Urquhart encourages Walter Reed Bethesda staff to engage in safe play during the 101 Critical Days of Summer to help decrease their overall stress levels in order to become more focused and productive, at mandatory safety briefings on May 22.

Urquhart acknowledged the Walter Reed Bethesda staff has gone through "a lot of change and that with change comes uncertainty and stress. Along with stress comes a lack of focus, and errors, mistakes and ac-

cidents can occur. Safety is a serious business, and the ability to take care of yourself makes a difference.

"There is no better way for you to decrease stress than through humor, play, fun and laughter," Urquhart added, saying "five minutes of a good sustained belly laugh provides the same kind of cardiovascular benefits as 20 minutes on a treadmill. So I go to the gym and watch people on the treadmill."

She added every time a person smiles or laughs, the stress levels of that person decrease making him or her more focused and productive. "Every time you laugh you increase endorphins in your blood stream giving you a boost of energy to make you feel good. Secondly, it decreases stress hormones. Thirdly, it decreases muscle tension and breaks your stress cycle. Fourthly, you increase oxygen levels to the front part of your brain making you instantly

more focused and productive."

Urquhart said there are certain things we do in which we do not want to be distracted.

"As professionals in the health care field, you are involved and engaged in helping and supporting wounded warriors and their family members during some of the most important and memorable moments of their entire lives, which makes your work incredibly rewarding and meaningful," she continued. "Let your purpose guide you, and then let humor sustain you."

She urged the Walter Reed Bethesda staff "to engage in play" during the 101 Critical Days of Summer to help decrease their overall stress levels in order to become more focused and productive, but to do so with safety paramount.

For more summer safety advice, go to <https://safety.army.mil/>, or www.safety-center.navy.mil.

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Remembering the Battle of Midway on its Anniversary



Oil tanks burn at Midway after the Japanese attack, June 4, 1942.

**By Helen Hocknell
Special for The Journal**

June 4 through 7 marks the 71st anniversary of the Battle of Midway, a dramatic turning point in the U.S. fight against the Imperial Japanese Navy in the Pacific and one of the most storied chapters in U.S. Navy history.

While the events at Midway have become engrained in the Navy culture, few are aware of the important role Navy Medicine played in the battle.

"The stories of these doctors and hospital corpsmen who tended to the wounded, while under attack and being ordered to abandon ship, is a great testament to the dedication of the Navy medical Department," said Navy Medical Historian Jan Herman, producer of the Navy-produced film, "Battle Station Sickbay." It tells the story of the physicians and hospital corpsmen who served at sea during World War II in the Pacific.

While making the documentary, Herman had the chance to interview hospital corpsmen and physicians who were onboard ships involved in the Battle of Midway.

In the film, Lt. (Dr.) Joseph P. Pollard, a physician stationed on the USS Yorktown (CV-5), recalled the devastation dealt to the aircraft carrier by bombs and underwater torpedoes during the battle. One bomb fell right outside Pollard's station, striking close

to anti-aircraft gun mounts manned by about 40 men, 20 of whom were killed instantly.

"The rest were casualties of one sort or another," said Pollard. "It was bedlam. People came in so fast, they just swarmed in," he recalled. Pollard said many of the wounded had limbs blown off and required tourniquets to stop the bleeding.

"There was a terrific noise, the ship shuddered, the deck came up under me, and it couldn't have been anything but a torpedo," remembered Pollard. "And I'm lying there and I'm saying to myself, 'Boy, that's one torpedo; we can take that one, but I hope we don't get any more.' By the time I got that through my mind, here comes another one, and the ship began to list."

Eventually, "Pollard ended up in the (water)," said Herman.

Many lives were lost, and ultimately, the USS Yorktown, which had undergone hasty repairs after heavy damage during the Battle of Coral Sea, was sunk. However, the battle was a decisive win for the U.S. that put the Japanese on the defensive for the remainder of the war.

The Battle of Midway began when American code breakers determined that the Japanese were targeting Midway, a tiny atoll used primarily for refueling, in an attempt to extend their defensive perimeter. On June 3, six months after



Onboard USS Yorktown after the ship was hit by dive bombers.



The ruins of a bombed ship at Dutch Harbor, Alaska, on June 5, 1942.

the attack on Pearl Harbor, a U.S. PBV "Catalina" flying boat spotted Japanese carriers about 700 miles from Midway, allowing the U.S. to launch an ambush on the Japanese that would turn the tide of the war.

"It was their first major defeat in World War II. Midway signaled the Jap-

anese had gone as far as they were going to go," said Herman. The battle cost the Japanese four aircraft carriers, a heavy cruiser, hundreds of aircraft and thousands of lives. "They'd never recover from the losses they sustained."

To learn more about the Battle of Midway and Navy

history, please visit: www.history.navy.mil/index.html. If you are interested in viewing "Navy Medicine at War: Battle Station Sickbay," the video is available for checkout at the Naval Support Activity Bethesda Public Affairs office, Building 11, Room 216, or by calling 301-295-1803.

Hurricane Season is Here: How to Prepare

By Jeremy K. Johnson
NSAB Public Affairs
staff writer

According to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the 2013 hurricane season begins tomorrow and early models indicate an “active to extremely active” season.

The NOAA web site reads: “For the six-month hurricane season ... NOAA’s Atlantic Hurricane Season Outlook says there is a 70 percent likelihood of 13 to 20 named storms (winds of 39 mph or higher), of which seven to 11 could become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or higher), including three to six major hurricanes (Category 3, 4 or 5; winds of 111 mph or higher).”

Naval Support Activity Bethesda’s (NSAB) Emergency Manager Ron Kunz said readiness is critical, especially for those who are tasked with supporting operations on installations like NSAB. “People need to prep now,” he advised. “It is imperative that everyone be ready. The more educated they are, the more ready they are. When an event does occur, that will minimize their stress and anxiety.”

Kunz said an emergency plan should include practical approaches for solving a variety of problems, from having enough to food and water to knowing what to do with a pet if the need to evacuate should arise. “There were people who didn’t evacuate down in Louisiana [during Hur-



U.S. Navy file photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Gabriel Bevan

A working party assigned to Naval Submarine School in Groton, Conn. places sandbags around the power plant at Naval Submarine Base New London Oct. 28, 2012 in preparation for the storm surge expected from Hurricane Sandy. The 2013 hurricane season begins June 1 and lasts six months.

ricane Katrina] because they didn’t want to leave their pets behind, but the shelters were taking pets. That doesn’t have to happen. There are

resources to help families plan for this.”

One of those, he said, is *ready.navy.mil* operated by Command-

er, Navy Installations Command (CNIC). The site includes informa-

See **HURRICANE** page 9

Ethics Symposium Focuses on Justice in Healthcare

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Journal staff writer

Focusing on the theme “Embracing the Principle of Justice in Healthcare,” Walter Reed Bethesda hosted its 2nd Annual Healthcare Ethics Symposium May 14-16.

“In recognition of the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s ‘I Have a Dream’ speech, the focus of our symposium this year [was] guided by a reflection on how the concept of justice influences and defines our practices in health care,” explained Army Capt. (Dr.) Robert J. Walter, chair of the Walter Reed Bethesda Ethics Committee, and director of the National Capital Area Regional Healthcare Ethics Consortium.

Dr. Rueben C. Warren, director of the National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care and professor of Bioethics at Tuskegee University, called King a health care advocate. Quoting the famed civil rights leader, Warren stating, “Of all

the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”

Nearly 300 health care practitioners, including social workers, psychiatrists, nurses, bioethicists and physicians, attended the three-day symposium, according to Chaplain (Maj.) Stephen Pratel Sr., chaplain clinical ethicist for Walter Reed Bethesda and project officer for the event. “We’re excited about where we are taking ethics at this institution. We come from a great tradition, both here at Bethesda and the old Walter Reed, of ethical reflection and instruction,” the chaplain continued, adding “Justice is an essential aspect of health care.”

“Ethics, for me, is literally having a reverence for life,” Pratel added. “That is what [the symposium] is about – having a deeper reverence for life, and to be inspired in areas of ethical behavior and health care.” He explained this entails health care practitioners possessing a commitment for “justice, fairness and equal-

ity in all we do.” The military “sets the pace and tone for the world” in doing this, and Walter Reed Bethesda is “the flagship for military medicine,” he said.

In the delivery of patient care, one’s training, morale, values and integrity are important, explained Army Col. Ramona Fiorey, Walter Reed Bethesda chief of staff, in welcoming attendees to the symposium. She added for patient-centered care, it’s vital to reach an understanding of the “complex and emotional situations” which can occur to assist patients and their families with arriving at “the best decision, the right decision.”

“Wounded warrior care is not just about the medical needs; it is the care of the whole total person,” said Dr. Edward Gabriele, Navy Medicine Ethics and Integrity executive director. “When we care for our wounded warriors, our heroes, we’re caring not just for them as individuals, but we’re also caring for their families and their local communities. Thirdly,

the question comes up how does our sense of wounded warrior care move me, the ordinary citizen, to care more for a world that Dr. King pointed out to us in his own day, as wounded by the horrific tragedies of racism, sexism, prejudice and discrimination against so many people.”

“Public health requires that we strive to be our best self in the doctor’s office, in the hospital, in the research laboratory, in the public health setting, whether it be in the private or public setting, whether in be in the military or civil service, we’re required to be our best self,” Warren said. “Do the right thing as you do things right.”

Dr. Judith M. Feder, professor of public policy at Georgetown University, concluded the symposium with a discussion of the Affordable Care Act, saying, “We all would be better off with a quality health care system benefitting everyone, [and] getting rid of the injustice of treating some people and not all.”

Walter Reed Bethesda Honors Nurses

By Sharon Renee Taylor
WRNMMC Journal staff writer

Amazing, compassionate, committed — patients, their family members and staff members at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center used these words to describe the three nurses honored in a DAISY Award Ceremony held in Memorial Auditorium, May 8.

The ceremony marked the one-year anniversary of the special salute that celebrates nurses who provide exceptional patient care at the medical center. Since 2012, Walter Reed Bethesda has recognized the outstanding care provided by nearly 300 nurses nominated for the special honor, and selected more than 15 to receive a DAISY Award.

Selected from a group of more than 50 outstanding nurses nominated for top honors, Ida Hopkins, Navy Ensign Megan Willingham, and Ana Irizarry received recognition as “extraordinary” nurses during the quarterly held ceremony. Hopkins, a registered nurse in the Gastroenterology Clinic, received recognition as the DAISY Award Selectee for February; Willingham, a registered nurse on 5-Center, se-



Photo by Sharon Renee Taylor

From left, Ida Hopkins, Navy Ensign Megan Willingham, and Ana Irizarry received recognition as “extraordinary” nurses at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center during a quarterly DAISY Award ceremony held this month.

lected for March, and Irizarry, a registered nurse in the Emergency Department, received the honor for April.

A patient, who is also a registered nurse, nominated Hopkins for the award. She met Hopkins when she came to Walter Reed Bethesda for a routine diagnostic procedure, and cited her compassion, advocacy, commitment, professionalism, exceptional care and work as a team player.

“Her clinical skill and compassionate care exemplify the kind of nurse that our patients, their families, and our staff recognize as an outstanding role model,” the patient wrote.

The patient who nominated Willingham for the DAISY Award battled hoarseness to read her nomination in person at the ceremony. “I had throat surgery, neck surgery — unable to talk for 90 days since my surgery. Miraculously, through the work of this special nurse and all the diligence to get me through it, as of last Friday, I can talk,” the patient explained.

Noted for her excellent clinical skills and bedside manner, Willingham’s passion for nursing, “was truly outstanding,” according to her nomination. Nearing the end of a 30-year career in the Army, the patient explained childbirth was her only hospitalization, and she was uneasy about her impending surgery until she met Willingham. “From the first moment, she was able to instill a sense of trust, reassurance and encouragement.”

Perhaps the most moving tribute of the ceremony was presented by

the family of a former Walter Reed Bethesda patient, coincidentally named, Daisy. Army Lt. Col. Jose Torres supported his wife Wendy as she read the couple’s DAISY award nomination for Irizarry, both fighting tears.

Despite the brief period of time Wendy’s mother spent in the Emergency Department, Irizarry continued to check in on her mom and their family when Daisy was admitted as an inpatient. Irizarry’s frequent visits, soothing conversation, and “extra attention” to ensure her mother was comfortable as possible somehow eased Daisy’s excruciating pain, and reassured Wendy her mother was in very good hands, she explained.

“Ana’s [Irizarry] true devotion to her profession provided comfort, hope and faith,” said the grieving daughter, who explained the nurse has become a member of their family.

Bonnie and Mark Barnes served as keynote speakers for the anniversary ceremony at WRNMMC. The couple created the DAISY Award (an acronym for Disease Attacking the Immune System) and the DAISY Foundation 13 years ago, to express their gratitude for the exceptional care they received from the nurses who helped their family during the eight-week hospitalization of their son Patrick. The 33-year-old succumbed to the autoimmune disease, Idiopathic Thrombocytopenia Purpura in 1999.

The two spoke about the extraordinary compassion and excellence in clinical care the exceptional nurses provide that were honored at the ceremony.

“On top of all that great clinical excellence is the way you deliver care: with a kindness, a compassion, and a sensitivity, not only to your patient, but to all their family. And with family-centered care here, I’m so sure that your patients and family, don’t look at you as just the patient’s nurse, they see you as the whole family’s nurse because that’s how we felt about Pat’s nurses — they were our nurses,” Bonnie explained. “We are so proud to be able to be here for Nurses’ Week, to celebrate your fantastic nominees, and think about what you’re doing every day.”

Her husband Mark told the audience, “You are heroes; every one of you in this room is a hero. What you do each day for your patients each day in their eyes makes you a hero.” He called nurses, a “sacred treasure of this country.”



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HURRICANE

Continued from 7

tion on hurricanes including what they are, how they can impact an area, how to prepare using the Conditions of Readiness Checklist, and how to respond afterward.

In a statement released May 23, NOAA Acting Administrator Kathryn Sullivan, Ph.D. noted recent disasters are perfect examples of hurricanes causing damage in unexpected ways. “As we saw first-hand with Sandy,” she said, “it’s important to remember that tropical storm and hurricane impacts are not limited to the coastline. Strong winds, torrential rain, flooding, and tornadoes often threaten inland areas far from where the storm first makes landfall.”

At NSAB, new systems are being installed or considered to boost the overall preparedness of the installation, though Kunz says they won’t be activated until later this year.

The most immediate of these will be Giant Voice, a public address system that will reach every corner of the base with speakers that face inward from the fence line. CNIC mandated Giant Voice at all Navy installations as a direct result of the shooting incident at Fort Hood, Texas in 2009. The NSAB system is scheduled to go live this fall.

Another alert system being explored is Everbridge, a commercial system that allows alerts to reach pagers and cell phones whether they’re personal or government issued. Kunz said the system is ideal because it can be set up to prioritize who is called and in what order. “It can also be set so that it goes through a series of numbers for a person until they pick up and acknowledge, ensuring the alert gets delivered no matter what phone number they use,” he added.

In the meantime, Kunz said personnel at NSAB and its tenant commands can expect emergency notifications to continue coming in the form of email and announcements by representatives of the NSAB Emergency Management Working Group.

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Furlough, Position Descriptions Top Town Hall Discussion

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Journal staff writer

Civilian employees at Walter Reed Bethesda will begin receiving furlough letters within the next two weeks, Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks announced during town hall meetings at the medical center last week.

The Walter Reed Bethesda commander explained to staff, the 11-day furlough affecting most federal civilian employees here, begins with the pay period starting July 7, and will be one day per week through the end of the fiscal year, Sept. 30.

Originally, Department of Defense civilians faced a possible 22-day furlough, but because of efforts to deal with the budget shortfall, that included a deficit at Walter Reed Bethesda, those furlough days were cut in half. Those efforts included a reduction in staff travel, overtime, compensatory time and contracts. Walter Reed Bethesda Chief of Staff, Army Col. Ramona Fiorey, acknowledged any non-paid involuntary days off for staff, “is a very sensitive and emotional issue” affecting civilian employees individually, and Walter Reed Bethesda as an organization.



Photo by Bernard S. Little

Cynthia Hilsinger asks Walter Reed Bethesda leadership a question during a town hall meeting last week in Memorial Auditorium.

“We knew this was possible, but it is still hard to accept,” Fiorey stated in an email to all staff members earlier this month. “I hear from leaders and managers who are concerned about how their staffs are doing. I also hear concerns from staff members about the welfare of their leaders and managers. The genuine care happening daily not only for our patients, but for each other, is heartening, as is your perseverance.

Every one of you is valued and appreciated for your dedication to the mission of this hospital.”

The position description (PD) classification review of federal civilian jobs at both Walter Reed Bethesda and the Joint Task Force National Capital Region Medical Command (JTF CapMed), was another topic of discussion during the town hall. The process involved the review of approximately 4,000 civilian positions to ensure every job description across the JTF CapMed was properly classified with the appropriate series and grade.

Stephanie Rainey, Civilian Human Resources Center (CHRC) director, explained the objective was to have PDs standardize or “generic,” so they could be implemented region-wide to easier fill positions at various military treatment facilities within JTF CapMed.

Sandy Lehman, deputy director of CHRC, added that after the review, which was completed earlier this year, the majority of position actions are going to be reassignments. She explained reassignment is a change of an employee from one position to another without promotion or change to lower grade, level or band.

In discussing information technology (IT) improvements at Walter Reed Bethesda, Navy Lt. William Walders, chief information officer, said reliability of the medical center’s network has been increased because of recent system upgrades. He added IT customer service hours have also increased, with the service center now open from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m. weekdays, and from 7

a.m. to 3 p.m., on weekends. Also, on call support is available 24 hours at 301-295-6300 or 301-295-2664.

Wireless service has also been installed in all patient clinical areas in the medical center, and cell phone reception has been upgraded at locations on base where it was previously not available, the Navy lieutenant added.

Walders said in October, there were approximately 4,500 outstanding IT trouble tickets, and that number has been reduced to now a little more than 200. “That’s pretty significant. We fixed our processes and focused on some areas of improvement. We took a lot of feedback from staff on customer service and how we can better do business,” he explained, crediting the “herculean effort” of the IT operational team with the improvements.

“Our goal is to get [trouble tickets] to zero, and answer [service tickets] within five days,” Walders said.

Following Walders, Chief Hospital Corpsman Derek Eaton encouraged full staff participation in the Command Climate Survey, currently underway and running through June 10. The survey, focusing on equal opportunity, morale and organizational effectiveness at Walter Reed Bethesda, can be completed on any workspace computer via the intranet. Responses are confidential, he said. “Last year, we had about 31 percent of the command staff participate; hopefully, we get more than that for this survey. You’ve heard, ‘What You Do Matters,’ well what you say matters [in the Command Climate Survey],” the chief added.

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